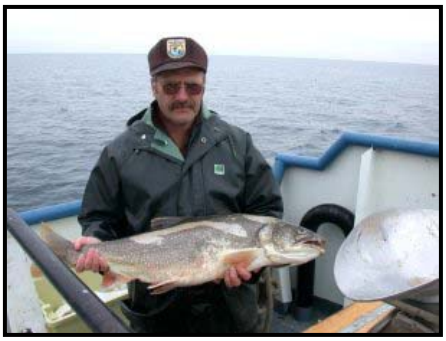
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Alpena FRO Accomplishment Report

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

Parry Sound Strain Broodstock Planning



Alpena FRO Project Leader McClain participated in a conference call on July 10 to finalize plans for development of a Parry Sound strain lake trout broodstock for use in U.S. waters of Lake Huron. The Parry Sound strain is one of two remnant stocks of Lake Huron lake trout that inhabit Ontario waters of Georgian Bay. This native strain has been instrumental in restoration of wild populations of lake trout in the Parry Sound region of Georgian Bay and is a recommended strain for the lakewide rehabilitation plan for Lake Huron. McClain has been working with Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) biologists to develop a strategy that would enable the Service to create a Parry Sound strain at Sullivan's Creek NFH. Issues that have been impeding the effort include restrictions on importing gametes or fish from Canada that have not been certified as disease free (Title 50) and public resistance (Ontario) to lethal sampling of the wild Parry Sound stock to conduct fish health certification. Recent genetic analysis of Parry Sound broodstock being held in the Ontario hatchery system resulted in the recommendation that they go back to the wild and develop a new line of broodstock of this strain for their rehabilitation program. Concurrently, Ontario has developed a quarantine facility that will enable them to receive fertilized eggs collected from wild fish and hold them long enough to complete the required fish health screening. If certified as disease free, the fish can then be transferred to broodstock hatcheries in Ontario and brought to Michigan for use in the U.S. rehabilitation effort. Ontario has agreed to hold enough fish in the quarantine facility to accommodate both programs. Presently, the plan calls for collection of gametes in the fall of 2004, 2005 and 2006. Additional participants on the call included OMNR management, hatchery, and fish health biologists, as well as Curt Friez and Crystal Legault from the Pendills Creek/Sullivan's Creek NFH and Rick Nelson from the LaCrosse Fish Health Center. Development of a broodstock strain from one of only two remnant Lake Huron stocks should facilitate efforts of the Service's National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) to produce the best hatchery product as a key component of the lake trout rehabilitation effort in Lake Huron. Stocking the Parry Sound strain in Georgian Bay has led to reestablishment of a self-sustaining population in those waters. Development of a Parry Sound broodstock for use by the NFHS should enhance the lake trout rehabilitation effort in other regions of northern Lake Huron**.**

Jerry R. McClain

Survival of Lake Huron Yearling Lake Trout Assessed for Differing Quality

Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt of the Alpena FRO analyzed return data of coded-wire-tagged (CWT) lake trout to assess the differential survival of standard quality and enhanced quality lake trout yearlings reared at Jordan River National Fish Hatchery (NFH). As part of a lakewide study plan, paired plantings of standard quality (≈ 20 per pound) and enhanced quality (≈ 10 per pound) CWT lake trout were planted at each of four sites in both 1996 (1995 year class) and 1998 (1997 year class). The four sites stocked with experimental lake trout from north to south were Adams Point, Middle Island, Sturgeon Point, and Point Au Barques. For each year class, approximately 30,000 standard quality and 30,000 enhanced quality lake trout yearlings were planted at each stocking site. Since 1996, these CWT lake trout have been captured in survey, commercial (gill-net and trap-net), and recreational gears. Previous analyses of these return data used the returns from all gear types and demonstrated statistically ($P<0.0001$) higher rates of survival for the enhanced quality lake trout than the standard quality lake trout. Woldt's analysis used only return data in graded mesh survey gear. Using only graded mesh survey gear avoids potential problems of using different gear types that may have differing units of effort and differing selectivity patterns for different size classes of lake trout. Since 1996, there have been 181 returns of the standard quality 1995 year class and 289 returns of the enhanced quality 1995 year class in survey gear. Since 1998, there have been 79 returns of the standard quality 1997 year class and 187 returns of the enhanced quality 1997 year class in survey gear. The catch rate (catch per 1,000 feet of net) for enhanced quality lake trout in survey gear was statistically greater than the catch rate of standard quality lake trout for the 1995 year class, the 1997 year class, and for both year classes pooled ($P<0.001$). When return rate data were analyzed by year class and by stocking site, catch rates for enhanced quality lake trout in survey gear were statistically greater than catch rates of standard quality lake trout for 2 of 4 stocking sites for each year class ($P<0.013$).

Overall the catch of enhanced quality lake trout in graded mesh survey gear was higher than the catch rate of standard quality lake trout in graded mesh survey gear; however, catch rates of enhanced quality lake trout were not higher than catch rates of standard quality lake trout at all sites and for all year classes. Results of this analysis seem to support the earlier analysis and confirm that in Lake Huron enhanced quality hatchery reared yearling lake trout survive better than standard quality hatchery reared yearling lake trout. This may only be the case for Jordan River produced fish, however, since all fish used in this study came from the Jordan River NFH. Evaluating the effects of hatchery rearing procedures allows the Service to better support lake trout restoration efforts by providing the best quality hatchery product possible. This outcome is consistent with the Service's goal of building and maintaining self-sustaining populations of native fish species.

Aaron P. Woldt

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Thunder Bay River Working Committee Meeting

Assistant Project Leader Tracy Hill participated in a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Working Committee meeting for Thunder Bay Power (Working

Committee). The Working Committee was created to assist Thunder Bay Power with its requirements to FERC under the terms of their license. Dr. Hill is the Service representative on the Working Committee. During the meeting progress on 2003 field activities was discussed. Plans for Article 409 (Fish Passage) were also discussed. This article and development of a plan for fish passage will be the focus of the next meeting planned for August 26 in Alpena. Plans for expansion of a fishing pier below the 9th Street Dam were also finalized. The Working Committee is seeking assistance from the FWS to develop grants for funding future projects. The meeting was attended by member representatives from Michigan DNR, Thunder Bay Power and FWS. In addition representatives from Thunder Bay River Restoration Committee, Hubbard Lake Sportsmen and Development Association, Northeast Michigan Counsel of Governments, also participated. Service involvement in this initiative provides an opportunity to minimize the impacts of habitat alteration on fish and other aquatic species from the hydropower facilities.

Tracy D. Hill

Cooperation with Native Americans

Coded Wire Tag Extraction

During the last two weeks of July 2003, Fishery Biologists Adam Kowalski and Scott Koproski extracted and read coded-wire-tags (CWT's) from lake trout. CWT's are microscopic metal tags placed in the snouts of juvenile lake trout at the hatchery. Hatchery personnel inject tags into the fish and remove the fish's adipose fin so that tagged lake trout can be identified by anglers and researchers. Lake trout heads were collected during the spring fishery independent lake whitefish survey conducted by the Alpena FRO. We also extracted and read CWT's from sport-fishery caught lake trout heads collected by Michigan DNR creel clerks in Lake Huron. CWT's are extracted by cutting lake trout snouts into smaller and smaller pieces until the tag can be seen and removed. A metal detector is used to help the extractor find tags. CWT's are read under a microscope, and each tag's unique number is recorded. The tag number, when compared to stocking records, yields information such as stocking location, stocking date, fish age, fish strain, and hatchery of origin. In total, Kowalski and Koproski removed and read 168 tags were from approximately 200 heads. Not all adipose clipped lake trout contain CWT's, because some lake trout shed their tag and some are erroneously fin clipped. Additional lake trout heads will be received from Bay Mills Indian Community (BMIC), Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority (CORA), State of Michigan creel program, and the Alpena FRO. These heads will be processed when received. Data collected from lake trout CWT's are used in several ways. First, lake trout age data are used in population models that determine lake trout harvest limits for parties

to the Year 2000 Consent Decree. Second, stocking location data are used to determine lakewide lake trout movement patterns. Finally, two existing studies to determine differences in survival between enhanced quality and standard quality stocked lake trout and differences in survival of various lake trout strains depend on CWT data. These outcomes are consistent with the Service's goal of building and maintaining self-sustaining populations of native fish species while providing recreational fishing opportunities and meeting the needs of tribal communities. The multi-agency nature of this work is consistent with the Service's goal of establishing and maintaining open, interactive communication with its partner agencies.

Adam T. Kowalski

Partnerships and Accountability

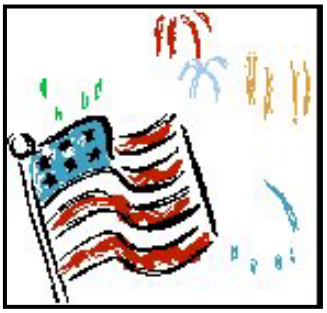
WATZ Radio Updated on Status of Double-Crested Cormorant Management Plan

Project Leader McClain conducted an interview with WATZ Radio News on July 25 relative to current status of the Service's Double-Crested Cormorant Management Plan. The topic was highlighted as a local issue during the annual Alpena Brown Trout Festival by Michigan Department of Natural Resources biologists in discussions relative to the future of the brown trout stocking program in Thunder Bay. Predation on yearling brown trout by cormorants and walleye has contributed to diminished success of the MDNR stocking program in recent years and may lead to cessation of stocking in Thunder Bay. Alpena is one of the Lake Huron communities where the perceived impacts of cormorants on local sport fisheries prompts frequent discussions and questions with staff of the Alpena FRO. In the interview McClain explained the alternatives examined in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the alternative preferred by the Service and indicated that the final ruling is expected in the fall of 2003. Public outreach is an important component of the Alpena Fishery Resources Office program. Providing information to the local public on issues of concern provides for improved office and agency visibility.

Jerry R. McClain

Public Use

Alpena July 4th Parade



In an effort to increase station recognition within the community, the Alpena FRO participated in the annual 4th of July parade in Alpena, MI. Alpena FRO Fishery Biologists Tracy Hill, Adam Kowalski, Susan Wells, and Admin Tech Debra Turner distributed brochures and candy along the parade route while walking alongside our assessment boat *R/V Karignondi*. Participation in the parade provided an opportunity for the community to view one of the boats used by this office, and increase agency visibility. The boat was

decorated in red, white, and blue to celebrate our country's birthday. This accomplishment was an educational and outreach opportunity. We were able to showcase the Alpena FRO to the public. The parade attendance was in the thousands including local television news channels and newspapers.

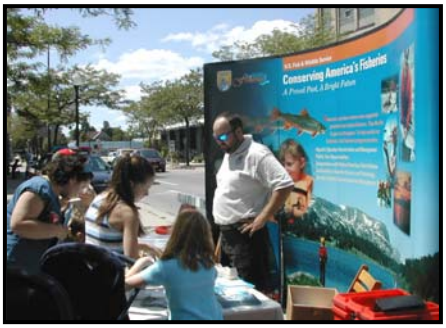
Debra L. Turner

Service Guest Presenter at Exchange Club Meeting

Biologist Bowen of the Alpena Fishery Resources Office was a guest speaker for the Alpena Exchange Club in Alpena, Michigan at their monthly meeting on July 29. Bowen presented an overview of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Michigan in a PowerPoint slide show. The presentation covered general facts about the Service, and highlighted Michigan offices and specific programs and projects in the state. Many times the public is aware of specific activities associated with the Service but don't have a grasp of the extent of work being done in their area and state. The program was well received and members had many questions about specific activities. Education and outreach are important components to fulfill the Service's mission. Sixteen community leaders were educated about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Service's mission, and Service activities in their local area.

Anjanette K. Bowen

Brown Trout Festival Kids Fishing Derby



The annual Brown Trout Festival was held in Alpena Michigan July 19-27. Events for the whole family were held throughout the week including a fishing derby for children on July 24. Alpena FRO participated in this event by providing a booth with activities and literature to the public. New educational fishery games were implemented for this event. Games included a salmon migration game that describes the plight of the fish to grow and spawn and fish puzzles which teach children the anatomy of a fish. These games are focused for children ages 12 and under and were a huge success at the event. Biologists Wells, Koproski, and Bowen staffed the booth for this event. This accomplishment provided an educational and outreach opportunity for the local community surrounding the Alpena FRO. We utilized a hands-on approach to teaching these 300 children about fish and their habitat requirements. They were also exposed to ongoing projects at the Alpena FRO and the different programs within the Service.

Susan E. Wells

Alpena Downtown Friday Night

Alpena Fishery Resources Office Assistant Project Leader Tracy Hill and Project Leader Jerry McClain staffed a Service information booth at Alpena Downtown Friday Night on July 18. Downtown Friday Night is a family event held in the city of Alpena. The Alpena FRO collected samples of native (smallmouth bass, walleye and northern pike) and

invasive fish species (round goby, ruffe and zebra mussels) from the Thunder Bay River for display at the event. Downtown Friday Night participants received information about Lake Huron fisheries and fisheries management by visiting the booth. Approximately 200 people visited the booth. This citywide event allowed the Alpena FRO the opportunity to fulfill one of the station goals of distributing information to the general public about fish and wildlife resources, natural ecosystems and programs of the Fish and Wildlife Service. This citywide event allowed the Alpena FRO the opportunity to fulfill one of the station goals of distributing information to the general public about fish and wildlife resources, natural ecosystems and programs of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Tracy D. Hill

Leadership in Science and Technology

Equipment Maintenance

During the month of July, Fishery Biologists Scott Koproski and Adam Kowalski began mending gill nets used by the Alpena FRO during fishery assessment activities. Approximately 5,000 ft. of gill net were repaired. Koproski and Kowalski mended all the lake trout assessment nets used to conduct fall surveys at Six Fathom Bank and Yankee Reef. These nets consist of 100 foot panels of 4½ to 6" stretch mesh nets in ½" increments. Koproski and Kowalski also began repairing nets used in Alpena FRO's fishery independent lake whitefish assessment. These nets consist of 100 foot panels of 2 to 6" stretch mesh nets in ½" increments. Mending duties will continue in coming months, because there are additional lake whitefish nets that need repair. Gear maintenance and construction is an extremely important component of fisheries assessment. Without properly constructed or mended nets, survey data could be biased due to gear that fishes improperly. Biologists Koproski and Kowalski obtained training in gill net construction and maintenance in recent years and are responsible for all of Alpena's gear maintenance. The gill nets mended in July are used by the Alpena FRO to assess both lake whitefish and lake trout populations in Lake Huron. Lake trout and lake whitefish are native species to Lake Huron and are commercially and recreationally important species for both state and tribal fishers. Accurately assessing the status of these populations is consistent with the Service's goal of building and maintaining self-sustaining populations of native fish species while providing recreational fishing opportunities and meeting the needs of tribal communities.

Scott R. Koproski

Workforce Management

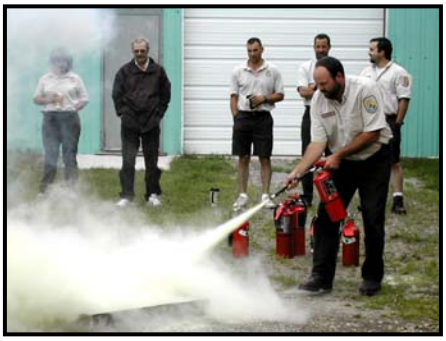
Alpena FRO meets with GSA on future of Alpena Federal Building

General Services Administration (GSA) personnel from the Chicago office were in Alpena on July 1 to meet with tenants of the Alpena Federal Building relative to possible closure of the facility. Alpena FRO Project Leader McClain met with GSA to discuss

program operations and facility needs to help them with their planning efforts. A decision is expected by fall 2003 on the future of the Alpena Federal Building. Options include renovation of the existing building to meet tenant operational, safety and accessibility needs as well as relocation to a new Alpena site. Currently the Alpena FRO has office and laboratory facilities in the federal building and has separate warehouse space for housing of boats and assessment gear at a remote location two miles from the federal building. Efficient operation of the Alpena Fishery Resources Office requires adequate work space for station staff and its management assistance activities. The possible closure of the federal building that currently houses the office will require effective communication with General Services Administration to ensure that new office space will be adequate to meet staff and operational needs of the office. This activity is consistent with Workforce Management objectives of the Service's Fishery Program Strategic Vision.

Jerry R. McClain

Alpena FRO Completes Annual Fire Extinguisher Training



On July 16, Alpena FRO staff completed required annual fire extinguisher training. The training was provided by Great Lakes Fire and Safety Equipment in Alpena, Michigan. Training involved a short video on fire and extinguisher types, how to put out a fire with an extinguisher, and how to inspect extinguishers to keep them in working order. Following the video a fire demonstration was held and each employee practiced extinguishing a live fire. Fire extinguisher training is important to preserve the safety of staff in the event of a fire, particularly in remote locations such as on watercraft.

Anjanette K. Bowen

Accomplishment Archive